



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: Akron's Drinking Water and Lead Awareness**

### **1. Does Akron Test Its Drinking Water for Lead?**

**YES**, Akron regularly tests for lead and has complied with lead testing rules as required by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Testing was first required in 1992 and continues through today with the most recent EPA-mandated tests conducted in 2015.

### **2. What Testing is Required?**

Because of the City of Akron's consistent compliance with EPA regulations associated with lead, the EPA requires Akron to test drinking water in a sampling of 50 homes every three years. Water from 90% of the homes tested must not exceed 15 parts per billion (ppb) of lead. This is referred to as the 90% Action Level.

### **3. Is Akron's Drinking Water within Requirements Established by the EPA?**

**YES**, since testing for lead began in 1992 Akron's drinking water has remained in compliance with the lead requirements of the EPA.

### **4. What are Akron's recent test results for lead?**

The EPA sets the Action Level for the 90th percentile at 15 parts per billion (ppb). Akron water has been below the EPA 90% Action Level since testing began in 1992 with a 90th percentile of 9.79 ppb in 2015. In the last 252 samples tested for lead since 2003, Akron has had only 2 samples that tested greater than 15 ppb.

### **5. If a sample for lead at a home exceeds 15 ppb, is this a violation?**

**NO**, a single sample is not a violation because the EPA has not established an individual sample limit. EPA rules specify the number of lead samples to be taken and the 90th percentile Action Level of 15 ppb. If any sample is greater than 15 ppb, Akron will investigate to confirm that the customer properly followed the testing procedure, examine the faucet typically used for water consumption and provide recommendations regarding lead reduction.

### **6. What Are The Sources of Lead in Water?**

Lead seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the plumbing. Buildings built prior to 1986 are more likely to have lead pipes, fixtures, and solder. New buildings can also be affected, since even "lead-free" plumbing manufactured before 2014 may contain up to 8 percent lead. The most common problem is with brass or chrome-plated brass fixtures which can leach significant amounts of lead into water, especially hot water.

## 7. Does Akron Treat its Water to Reduce the Risk of Lead?

**YES**, Akron has an EPA Corrosion Control Program and has been adding a corrosion inhibitor called zinc orthophosphate at the Water Plant since the 1990's. The corrosion inhibitor coats the interior of all water pipes from the treatment plant to the faucets in your home. This corrosion inhibitor acts as a barrier to help keep lead from dissolving from the plumbing in a customer's residence and throughout the water distribution system. The Akron Water Plant has spent more than \$1,300,000 in the last 10 years adding this extra layer of protection for our customers.

## 8. Does My Property Have a Lead Water Service?

The pipe from the water main in the street to the shutoff valve typically at your sidewalk is called the "water service". Most of the homes built in Akron prior to the 1940's had water services installed made of lead. Approximately 5% of Akron customers have a lead service. Akron had approximately 40,000 lead services at one time and has been aggressively replacing them with copper piping for many years, with only an estimated 4,300 active lead services remaining. The City has sent letters to inform each customer with a lead service.

## 9. What Are The Health Effects of Lead?

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

## 10. What Can I Do To Reduce My Risk of Exposure to Lead in My Water?

- ***Run your water to flush out lead.*** If water has not been used for several hours, run water for thirty seconds to two minutes before using it for drinking or cooking. This helps flush any lead in the water that may have been leached from the plumbing.
- ***Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.*** Do not cook with, drink, or make baby formula from the hot water tap. Lead dissolves more easily in hot water.
- ***Do not boil water to remove lead.*** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- ***Because your plumbing fixtures could contain lead, investigate whether any fixtures in your home contain lead and consider replacing them when appropriate.***

**For More Information:** Please visit US EPA's Web site at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead), call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD, or contact your health care provider.